



A STUDY ON THE SOCIO-CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOL STUDENTS OF PUDUCHERRY IN RELATION TO THE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

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ABSTRACT

School failure and poor academic achievement are one of the fundamental reasons of social exclusion of children. The academic achievement of children is directly and indirectly influenced by the environment in which they live. The Socio-cultural Environment in which a child lives determines the child's academic achievement and their classroom behavior. In this background, the focus of this study is to find out how the Socio-cultural Environment of the students, with its different dimensions, is related to the academic achievement of the secondary school students. This study also intends to find out the various factors that influence the Socio-cultural Environment and Academic Achievement of the secondary school students. This research was conducted among 529 students of government secondary school of Puducherry, chosen using multistage random sampling method. Data on Socio-cultural Environment and Academic Achievement along with the demographic variables of the students were collected, analyzed and discussed. The result shows that gender of the students influences their academic achievement very much. The female students outperform their male counterparts in their academic achievement in both internal and external exams. And, there is a positive linear relationship between Academic Achievement and Socio-cultural Environment of the secondary school students of Puducherry. The study concludes with suggestions and recommendations to improve the Academic Achievement of the secondary school students of Puducherry.

KEY WORDS: Academic Achievement; Socio-cultural Environment; Internal Achievement; External Achievement; Government Schools; Family; Neighborhood.

INTRODUCTION

The academic achievement of children is directly and indirectly influenced by the environment they live. Predictably, school, home and socializing spaces are the prominent places that shape a child's overall environment. In India, the privatization of education in a competitive manner has led to the marginalization of Government schools. Studying in the Government schools is more often than not seen as a symbol of lower social status and economic inability. Hence there have emerged several studies comparing the academic achievement of students in private and Government schools under different socio-economic circumstances. However, the generalization of all Government schools into a single category often leads to manifold misleading conclusions about the public school system, Government policies and teaching-learning methods. The kind of Socio-Cultural environment in which a child lives determines the child's academic achievement and overall development into a matured and able personality. The social and environmental factors play a crucial role in determining the extent to which educational potentialities are realized (Capper, 1990). There is significant correlations between home environments and the children's academic achievement and their classroom behavior (Bradley, Caldwell, & Rock, 2016). This study noted strongest relations between the primacy of early experience and predominance of the contemporary environment at home and cumulative effects in terms of children's academic achievement. Moreover, the Socio Economic factors of children, such as gender, religion, caste, medium of instruction, urban/rural background and parents' education and occupation influence a child's academic achievement directly. For example, level of parental education, parental occupation, socioeconomic status, family size and family structure have been identified as important in determining the educational achievement of many minority group children (Rodriguez R. F., 1982). Chopra (1967) has observed the parent occupation in relationship to the academic achievement of children in the Indian scenario. Based on the above factors, the present study aims to study the Socio-Cultural Environment of Government school children in relation to their Academic Achievement.

It is a general notion that all the Government schools are the same, and so is the academic achievement of children studying in these schools. It is true that most of the children studying in Government schools belong to low income families, backward caste background and rural localities. The study has made several observations in government schools of Puducherry. There is wide variation in the academic performance of students in different government schools. Within a single school, some children had very high academic achievement while some others were disproportionately low in academic achievement. During the observations and personal interactions, it was found that those from good family background and Socio-Cultural Environment showed better performance in their studies. The socio-cultural variance which reflects the acculturation level of the family and the socioeconomic status of the home is significantly related to the achievement test performance of children (Rodriguez R. F., 1991). It is important to study these factors and nature of its influence in a child's academic achievement empirically. This becomes especially important when it comes to children studying in Government schools where little attention is paid to assessing and improving the environments affecting children. The hypotheses of this study

have been framed in this background in order to find out the effect of Socio-Cultural Environment and other Socio economic factors in the academic achievement of children studying in Government schools of Puducherry.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

All the Government schools have the same syllabus, rules, regulations and facilities. The Government funding, staff appointment, policy decisions—all are taken only in common terms for all Government schools. But, children from some schools show very high academic achievement and those from some other schools perform poorly. And, children within the same school and classroom differ in their academic achievement despite the same environment at the school. The influence of family and socio-economic background on cognitive skills and learning competency has become an important area to be studied. The present study is an attempt to study these important areas by making a quantitative assessment of these factors in relation to the students' academic achievement. This study can thus offer suggestions and recommendations to the policy makers, school administrators and teachers to improve the academic achievement of children studying in Government schools by improving/changing these environments in a positive manner.

OBJECTIVES

General Objectives

The objective of the present study is to study on the Socio-Cultural Environment of the Government School Students of Puducherry and to trace its relationship with their Academic Achievement.

Specific Objectives

More specifically the study has been undertaken with the following objectives

- To study the Socio-Cultural Environment of Government School Students
- To study the academic achievement of the Government School Students
- To study the difference, if any, in the Socio-Cultural Environment of the Government School Students of Puducherry within the following sub groups
 - Gender
 - Religion
 - Community
 - Medium of Instruction
 - Locality of the Residence
- To study the difference, if any, in the Academic Achievement of the Government School Students of Puducherry within the following sub groups
 - Gender
 - Religion
 - Community
 - Medium of Instruction

➤ Locality of the Residence

- To study the relationship between the Socio-Cultural Environment of the Government school students and their Academic Achievement

HYPOTHESES

- There is no significant difference in the Socio-Cultural Environment of the Government School Students of Puducherry within the following sub groups

- Gender
- Religion
- Community
- Medium of Instruction
- Locality of the Residence

- There is no significant difference in the Academic Achievement of the Government School Students of Puducherry within the following sub groups

- Gender
- Religion
- Community
- Medium of Instruction
- Locality of the Residence

- There is no significant relationship between the Socio-Cultural Environment of the Government school students and their Academic Achievement

METHODOLOGY

The normative survey method is used in the present study. The data is collected from the ninth class students of government schools of Puducherry. The collected data has been quantified using statistical techniques. The quantified data has been analyzed, interpreted and discussed.

SAMPLING

The ninth standard students of Puducherry Government Schools forms the population of the study. Multi Stage Cluster Sampling Technique is used and 529 students have been sampled out from the population and a field survey has been conducted and data has been collected from the students. Every single section of ninth class in the schools of Puducherry Government is considered as a cluster. Twenty one Government schools of Puducherry is randomly selected using stratified random sampling technique in the first stage of the sampling and one among the different sections of ninth class of the selected schools has been selected randomly for the study.

TOOLS USED FOR THE STUDY

Socio-Cultural Environment Scale has been used to measure the different Socio-Cultural Environment of the government school students of Puducherry. This tool is validated specifically for this study. The tool is validated in order to understand the Personal, Family and Neighbor related Socio-Cultural Environment as these are the three dimensions of the scale.

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES USED

Descriptive Statistics, t-test, F-test and Correlation have been used in the present study. Descriptive Statistics is used to describe the mean and standard deviation of Socio-cultural Environment score and Academic Achievement score in relation to the students' background variables. t-test is used to test the significant differences in School Environment and Academic Achievement within the sub groups – Gender, Community, Medium of Instruction and locality of residence of the students. F-test is used to test the significant effect of religion on School Environment and Academic Achievement of secondary school students. Correlation is used to study the relationship between School Environment and Academic Achievement of secondary school students.

ANALYSIS

Descriptive Analysis of Socio-Cultural Environment

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation for Socio-Cultural Environment and its dimensions with respect to Gender

Gender	Socio-Cultural Environment		Personal (Dimension 1)		Family (Dimension 2)		Neighbourhood (Dimension 3)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Male	92	11	26	6	29	5	36	6
Female	100	12	33	7	30	5	36	6

It is inferred from the above table that the Mean score and Standard Deviation of Male Students in their Socio-Cultural Environment and its three dimensions: Personal, Family and Neighbourhood are 92, 11; 26, 6; 29, 5 and 36, 6 respectively. And, the Mean score and Standard Deviation of Female Students in their Socio-Cultural Environment and its three dimensions: Personal, Family and Neighbourhood are 100, 12; 33, 7; 30, 5 and 36, 6 respectively. Hence, Male students and Female Students differ in their Personal related Socio-Cultural Environment and other conditions are almost similar for both the groups.

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation for Socio-Cultural Environment and its dimensions with respect to Religion

Religion	Socio-Cultural Environment		Personal (Dimension 1)		Family (Dimension 2)		Neighbourhood (Dimension 3)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Hindu	96	12	29	7	29	5	35	6
Christian	92	12	28	7	28	7	34	4
Muslim	107	10	35	5	32	5	39	5

It is inferred from the above table that the Mean score and Standard Deviation of Hindu Students in their Socio-Cultural Environment and its three dimensions: Personal, Family and Neighbourhood are 96, 12; 29, 7; 29, 5 and 35, 6 respectively. The Mean score and Standard Deviation of Christian Students in their Socio-Cultural Environment and its three dimensions: Personal, Family and Neighbourhood are 92, 12; 28, 7; 28, 7 and 34, 4 respectively. And, the Mean score and Standard Deviation of Muslim Students in their Socio-Cultural Environment and its three dimensions: Personal, Family and Neighbourhood are 107, 10; 35, 5; 32, 5; and 39, 5 respectively. Students from different religious background differ in their Socio-Cultural background, as shown by the mean score.

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation for Socio-Cultural Environment and its dimensions with respect to Community

Community	Socio-Cultural Environment		Personal (Dimension 1)		Family (Dimension 2)		Neighbourhood (Dimension 3)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Other Backward Caste	97	13	30	8	30	5	36	7
Scheduled Caste	94	10	29	7	29	5	35	5

It is inferred from the above table that the Mean score and Standard Deviation of Other Backward Caste Students in their Socio-Cultural Environment and its three dimensions: Personal, Family and Neighbourhood are 97, 13; 30, 8; 30, 5 and 36, 7 respectively. And, the Mean score and Standard Deviation of scheduled caste Students in their Socio-Cultural Environment and its three dimensions: Personal, Family and Neighbourhood are 94, 10; 29, 7; 29, 5 and 35, 5 respectively. The Mean Score of both the Scheduled Caste students and the Other Backward Caste students are almost same. Though students of both the sub groups are from different community background, in Puducherry, the living conditions and their socio-economic status are almost the same. And thus, the same is reflected in the mean scores of Socio-Cultural Environment.

Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation for Socio-Cultural Environment and its dimensions with respect to the Locality of the residence

Locality	Socio-Cultural Environment		Personal (Dimension 1)		Family (Dimension 2)		Neighbourhood (Dimension 3)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Urban	97	12	30	7	30	5	37	7
Rural	95	12	29	7	29	5	35	6

It is inferred from the above table and figure that the Mean score and Standard Deviation of Urban Students in their Socio-Cultural Environment and its three dimensions: Personal, Family and Neighbourhood are 97, 12; 30, 7; 30, 5 and 37, 7 respectively. And, the Mean score and Standard Deviation of rural Students in their Socio-Cultural Environment and its three dimensions: Personal, Family and Neighbourhood are 95, 12; 29, 7; 29, 5 and 35, 6 respectively. Similar to that of Other Backward Caste and Scheduled Caste students, the mean Score of both the Urban students and the Rural students are also almost same. In Puducherry though we recognize and state some areas are urban and some other as rural, we could hardly find any difference in their living conditions. And, students who come to government schools are also from similar living conditions despite the locality of their residence. And thus, we could hardly find any difference in the mean score of Socio-Cultural Environment.

Descriptive Analysis of Academic Achievement

Table 5: Mean and Standard Deviation for Academic Achievement, External and Internal marks with respect to Gender

Gender	Academic Achievement in Percentage		External Marks in Percentage		Internal Marks in Percentage	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Male	49	14	34	15	71	16
Female	58	14	43	16	80	12

It is inferred from the above table and figure that the Mean score and Standard Deviation of Male Students in their overall Academic Achievement, Achievement in External and Achievement in Internal are 49, 14; 34, 15 and 71, 16 respectively. And, the Mean score and Standard Deviation of Female Students in their overall Academic Achievement, Achievement in External and Achievement in Internal are 58, 14; 43, 16 and 80, 12 respectively. Hence, Female students perform better than Male students in all the three areas of achievement.

Table 6: Mean and Standard Deviation for Academic Achievement, External and Internal marks with respect to Religion

Religion	Academic Achievement in Percentage		External Marks in Percentage		Internal Marks in Percentage	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Hinduism	53	15	39	16	76	15
Christianity	47	12	31	11	70	15
Islam	57	15	41	17	81	13

It is inferred from the above table and figure that the Mean score and Standard Deviation of Hindu Students in their overall Academic Achievement, Achievement in External and Achievement in Internal are 53, 15; 39, 16 and 76, 15 respectively. The Mean score and Standard Deviation of Christian Students in their overall Academic Achievement, Achievement in External and Achievement in Internal are 47, 12; 31, 11 and 70, 15 respectively. And, the Mean score and Standard Deviation of Muslim Students in their overall Academic Achievement, Achievement in External and Achievement in Internal are 57, 15; 41, 17 and 81, 13 respectively. Hence, Muslim students perform better than Hindu and Christian students in all the three areas of achievement.

Table 7: Mean and Standard Deviation for Academic Achievement, External and Internal marks with respect to Community

Community	Academic Achievement in Percentage		External Marks in Percentage		Internal Marks in Percentage	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Other Backward Caste	54	15	39	17	76	15
Scheduled Caste	52	13	36	13	75	14

It is inferred from the above table and figure that the Mean score and Standard Deviation of Other Backward Caste Students in their overall Academic Achievement, Achievement in External and Achievement in Internal are 54, 15; 39, 17 and 76, 15 respectively. And, the Mean score and Standard Deviation of Scheduled Caste Students in their overall Academic Achievement, Achievement in External and Achievement in Internal are 52, 13; 36, 13 and 75, 14 respectively. Hence, similar to that of the Socio-Cultural Environment, there is only a slight difference in the Mean Scores of the Academic Achievement between Other Backward Caste and Scheduled Caste students.

Table 8: Mean and Standard Deviation for Academic Achievement, External and Internal marks with respect to the Locality of the residence

Locality	Academic Achievement in Percentage		External Marks in Percentage		Internal Marks in Percentage	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Urban	52	14	37	15	75	15
Rural	54	15	39	16	77	14

It is inferred from the above table and figure that the Mean score and Standard Deviation of Urban Students in their overall Academic Achievement, Achievement in External and Achievement in Internal are 52, 14; 37, 15 and 75, 15 respectively. And, the Mean score and Standard Deviation of Rural Students in their overall Academic Achievement, Achievement in External and Achievement in Internal are 54, 15; 39, 16 and 77, 14 respectively. This also reflect in the result of the difference in Socio-Cultural Environment of Urban and Rural Students, as the mean score of the Academic Achievement is almost close.

Differential Analysis of Socio-Cultural Environment

Table 9: t - test for Socio-Cultural Environment and its dimensions with respect to Gender

Variable	Male			Female			t - value	df	Sig. (p)
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD			
Socio-Cultural Environment	252	91.98	10.82	277	100.05	12.27	-7.992	527	0.00
Personal (Dimension 1)	252	25.7	6.13	277	33.37	6.55	-13.865	527	0.00
Family (Dimension 2)	252	29.11	4.67	277	29.96	5.45	-1.929	525.11	0.054
Neighbourhood (Dimension 3)	252	35.73	6.47	277	35.69	6.2	0.074	527	0.941

It is inferred from the above table that on an average, Female Students possess better Socio-cultural Environment ($M=100.5$) than the Male Students ($M=91.98$). This difference is significant at 0.05 level; $t(527) = -7.992, p < 0.05$. At the same time this difference is significant only in the personal dimension of the Socio-Cultural Environment; $t(527) = -7.992, p < 0.05$. And there is no significant difference in the family dimension; $t(525.11) = -1.929, p > 0.05$ and neighbors dimension; $t(527) = 0.74, p > 0.05$ of Socio-cultural Environment.

Table 10: t - test for Socio-Cultural Environment and its dimensions with respect to Community

Variable	Other Backward Caste			Scheduled Caste			t - value	df	Sig. (p)
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD			
Socio-Cultural Environment	375	97.18	12.88	154	93.82	10.3	3.158	352.956	0.002
Personal (Dimension 1)	375	30.14	7.66	154	28.7	6.7	2.027	527	0.043
Family (Dimension 2)	375	29.73	5.23	154	29.12	4.77	1.249	527	0.212
Neighbourhood (Dimension 3)	375	35.99	6.63	154	35.01	5.46	1.761	342.788	0.079

It is inferred from the above table that on an average, Other Backward Caste Students possess Socio-cultural Environment ($M=97.18$) than the Scheduled Caste Students ($M=93.82$). This difference is significant at 0.05 level; $t(352.956) = 3.158, p < 0.05$. At the same time this difference is significant only in the personal dimension of the Socio-Cultural Environment; $t(527) = 2.027, p < 0.05$. And there is no significant difference in the family dimension; $t(527) = 1.249, p > 0.05$ and neighbors dimension; $t(342.788) = 1.761, p > 0.05$ of Socio-cultural Environment.

Table 11: t - test for Socio-Cultural Environment and its dimensions with respect to Medium of Instruction

Variable	Tamil			English			t - value	df	Sig. (p)
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD			
Socio-Cultural Environment	215	94	11.71	314	97.72	12.43	-3.457	527	0.001
Personal (Dimension 1)	215	28.3	6.99	314	30.69	7.55	-3.689	527	0.00
Family (Dimension 2)	215	29.6	5.25	314	29.53	5.01	0.147	527	0.883
Neighbourhood (Dimension 3)	215	34.67	6.16	314	36.42	6.34	-3.142	527	0.002

It is inferred from the above table that on an average, English Medium Students possess better Socio-cultural Environment ($M=97.72$) than the Tamil Medium Students ($M=94.00$). This difference is significant at 0.05 level; $t(527) = 3.457, p < 0.05$. At the same time this difference is significant only in the personal dimension of the Socio-Cultural Environment; $t(527) = 3.689, p < 0.05$ and in the Neighbourhood dimension $t(527) = -3.142, p < 0.05$. But, there is no significant difference in the family dimension; $t(527) = 0.147, p > 0.05$ of Socio-cultural Environment.

Table 12: t - test for Socio-Cultural Environment and its dimensions with respect to Locality of Residence

Variable	Urban			Rural			t - value	df	Sig. (p)
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD			
Socio-Cultural Environment	246	97.48	12.23	283	95.1	12.22	2.241	527	0.025
Personal (Dimension 1)	246	30.02	7.36	283	29.45	7.47	0.885	527	0.377
Family (Dimension 2)	246	29.72	4.94	283	29.41	5.25	0.704	527	0.481
Neighbourhood (Dimension 3)	246	36.65	6.53	283	34.89	6.02	3.223	527	0.001

It is inferred from the above table that on an average, Students who are residing at Urban locale possess better Socio-cultural Environment ($M=97.48$) than the Students who are residing at Rural locale ($M=95.10$). This difference is significant at 0.05 level; $t(527) = 2.241, p < 0.05$. At the same time this difference is not significant in the personal dimension of the Socio-Cultural Environment; $t(527) = 0.885, p > 0.05$ and in the Family dimension $t(527) = 0.704, p > 0.05$. But, the difference is significant in the Neighbourhood dimension; $t(527) = 3.223, p < 0.05$ of Socio-cultural Environment.

Table : f - test for Socio-Cultural Environment and its dimensions with respect to Religion

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Socio-Cultural Environment	Between Groups	4778.07	2	2389.04	16.817	0.00
	Within Groups	74722.5	526	142.06		
	Total	79500.5	528			
Personal (Dimension 1)	Between Groups	1079.01	2	539.5	10.149	0.00
	Within Groups	27960	526	53.16		
	Total	29039	528			
Family (Dimension 2)	Between Groups	337.05	2	168.53	6.602	0.001
	Within Groups	13427.6	526	25.53		
	Total	13764.6	528			
Neighbourhood (Dimensions 3)	Between Groups	462.96	2	231.48	5.904	0.003
	Within Groups	20622.2	526	39.21		
	Total	21085.2	528			

It is inferred from the above table that there is a significant effect of religion on levels of Socio-Cultural Environment, $F(2, 526) = 16.817, p < .05$. Further there is also a significant effect of religion on the levels of Personal dimension; $F(2, 526) = 10.149, p < .05$ of Socio-Cultural Environment, Family dimension; $F(2, 526) = 6.602, p < .05$ of Socio-Cultural Environment and Neighbourhood dimension $F(2, 526) = 5.904, p < .05$ of Socio-Cultural Environment.

Differential Analysis of Academic Achievement

Table 14: t - test for Academic Achievement, External and Internal marks with respect to Gender

Variable	Male			Female			t - value	df	Sig. (p)
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD			
Academic Achievement	252	48.78	14.31	277	57.66	13.64	-7.31	527	0.00
External Marks	252	33.94	14.68	277	42.65	15.85	-6.536	527	0.00
Internal Marks	252	71.03	16.17	277	80.18	12.08	-7.318	462.32	0.00

It is inferred from the above table that on an average, Female Students perform better in their Academic Achievement ($M = 57.66$) than the Male Students ($M = 48.78$). This difference is significant at 0.05 level; $t(527) = -7.310, p < 0.05$. Further, the same is reflected both in the external marks $t(527) = -6.536, p < 0.05$ and the internal marks $t(462.32) = -7.318, p < 0.05$. Hence female students are found performing better in all the areas of Academic Achievement.

Table 15: t - test for Academic Achievement, External and Internal marks with respect to Community

Variable	Other Backward Caste			Scheduled Caste			t - value	df	Sig. (p)
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD			
Academic Achievement	375	54.14	15.25	154	51.69	12.92	1.877	333.54	0.041
External Marks	375	39.46	16.75	154	36.17	13.36	2.385	353.84	0.018
Internal Marks	375	76.17	15.27	154	74.98	13.9	0.831	527	0.406

It is inferred from the above table that on an average, Other Backward Caste Students perform better in their Academic Achievement ($M = 54.14$) than the Scheduled Caste Students ($M = 51.69$). This difference is significant at 0.05 level; $t(333.54) = 1.877, p < 0.05$. At the same time this difference is significant only in the External Marks; $t(353.84) = 2.385, p < 0.05$. And, there is no significant difference in the Internal marks; $t(527) = 0.831, p > 0.05$ between Other Backward Caste and Scheduled Caste students.

Table 16 : t - test for Academic Achievement, External and Internal marks with respect to Medium of Instruction

Variable	Tamil			English			t - value	df	Sig. (p)
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD			
Academic Achievement	215	54.13	15.19	314	52.95	14.26	0.904	527	0.366
External Marks	215	39.34	16.84	314	37.93	15.22	1.003	527	0.316
Internal Marks	215	76.31	14.73	314	75.49	15	0.616	527	0.538

It is inferred from the above table that on an average, there is only a little difference between English Medium Students ($M = 52.95$) and the Tamil Medium Students ($M = 54.13$). And, the difference is not significant at 0.05 level; $t(527) = 0.904, p > 0.05$. Similarly there can be found no significant difference in External marks; $t(527) = 1.003, p > 0.05$ and Internal marks; $t(527) = 0.616, p > 0.05$ between English and Tamil medium Students.

Table 17 : t - test for Academic Achievement, External and Internal marks with respect to Locality of the Residence

Variable	Urban			Rural			t - value	df	Sig. (p)
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD			
Academic Achievement	246	52.27	14.46	283	54.44	14.74	-1.709	527	0.088
External Marks	246	37.39	15.28	283	39.47	16.37	-1.508	527	0.132
Internal Marks	246	74.59	15.41	283	76.9	14.35	-1.784	527	0.075

It is inferred from the above table that on an average, there is only a little difference between Students residing at urban locale ($M = 52.27$) and the Students residing at rural locale ($M = 54.44$). And, the difference is not significant at 0.05 level; $t(527) = -1.709, p > 0.05$. Similarly there is no significant difference in External marks; $t(527) = -1.508, p > 0.05$ and Internal marks; $t(527) = -1.784, p > 0.05$ between English and Tamil medium Students.

Table 18 : f - test for Academic Achievement, External and Internal marks with respect to Religion

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Academic Achievement	Between Groups	847.4	2	423.7	1.984	0.138
	Within Groups	112305	526	213.51		
	Total	113153	528			
External Marks	Between Groups	740.53	2	370.26	1.468	0.231
	Within Groups	132659	526	252.2		
	Total	133400	528			
Internal Marks	Between Groups	1189.07	2	594.53	2.701	0.068
	Within Groups	115791	526	220.14		
	Total	116980	528			

It is inferred from the above table that there is no significant effect of religion on the Academic Achievement, $F(2, 526) = 1.984, p > .05$. Further there is also no significant effect of religion on the External marks $F(2, 526) = 10.149, p > .05$, and Internal Marks, $F(2, 526) = 5.904, p < .05$.

Correlation between Academic Achievement and Socio-Cultural Environment

Table 19 : Correlation between Socio-Cultural Environment and Academic Achievement

Pearson Correlation	Academic Achievement	Socio-Cultural Environment
Academic Achievement	1	0.372
Sig. (p)		0
N	529	529

It is inferred from the above table that there is a significant relationship between the Socio- Cultural Environment and the Academic Achievement, $r = .37, p < .05$

DISCUSSION

Socio-Cultural Environment has been treated as the independent variable in this study and its relationship with the Academic Achievement of the government school students is studied. The significant differences, in the Socio-Cultural Environment, within the sub groups, Gender, Religion, Community, Medium of Instruction of the school and Locality in which the students are residing has been analyzed. It is evident from the results that there is a significant difference between the male students and female students in their Socio-cultural Environment scores. At the same time the difference is only in the personal dimension of Socio-cultural Environment. Whereas the difference is not significant in the Family and neighbours related dimensions of Socio-cultural Environment. It is a positive sign that the family and the neighbours are treating the male and female, at the school level, equal by providing similar socio-cultural Environment. At the same time, probably, since individuals play a major role in shaping the Personal – Socio-Cultural environment by actively taking a part in peer group activities, their nature of relationship with family and friends, spending time for playing and studies and addiction towards cinema, we could find the difference in the personal dimension of Socio-cultural Environment.

Similar to that of the difference between male and female students, there is a significant difference between the Other Backward Caste students and SC students

in their Socio-Cultural Environment score and the difference is significant only in the personal dimension and not in the Family and Neighbourhood dimensions of Socio-Cultural Environment. Though the two groups of students are from different community background, their Socio-Cultural Environment is almost same. Almost all of the students of government schools are from very poor and deprived family. Their work nature and economic conditions are also same. This reflects in the result and so we could not find any significant difference in the Family and Neighbourhood related dimensions of the Socio-cultural Environment. At the same time personal related Socio-Cultural Environment of the secondary school students is not related to the living conditions and economic situations. It is something related to the socializing space they have in the society which is different for both of them in our society. And it results in a significant difference in the personal dimension of Socio-Cultural Environment.

There is also a significant difference, in the Socio-Cultural Environment, between Tamil Medium students and English Medium students. When we analyze the result with respect to different dimensions, we could see that the difference is significant only in the Personal and Neighbourhood dimensions and not in the family dimension. In this study, among the students of Tamil medium schools, 99.5% of them are from rural background and among the students of English medium schools 78% of them are from urban background. This may be one of the reason for the difference in the Personal and Neighbourhood related dimensions of the Socio-cultural Environment.

The Urban and Rural students of secondary schools differ significantly in their Socio-cultural environment score has been found. But, the difference is significant only in Neighbourhood dimensions. Despite the locality of the students there is no significant difference in the Personal and family dimensions of the Socio-cultural Environment. In Puducherry one may not find a lot of differences between urban and rural locale in terms of their culture and practices and so the locality of the students does not affect their socio-cultural environment in the personal and family dimensions. At the same time we could not completely neglect the effect of the locality of the students in their Socio-cultural Environment. Thus, it has reflected in the dimension, neighbor.

Religion is one of the important factors that influence the culture of any society. It has been reflected in our study also. It has been found that the effect of religion in the levels of Socio-cultural Environment is significant. And, the effect is significant in all the three dimensions of Socio-cultural Environment.

Similar to the analysis of Socio-cultural Environment, the significant differences, in the Academic Achievement, within the sub groups, Gender, Religion, Community, Medium of Instruction of the school and Locality in which the students are residing has also been analyzed and the results are discussed here.

It is clear from the result that there is a significant difference exists between male students and female students in their overall Academic Achievement. Similarly the difference is significant in the internal marks and external marks as well. (Dayioglu & Türüt-Asik, 2004) also, in their study, have come with similar result that the female students, on average, outperform their male counter parts.

As we have discussed earlier, irrespective of their community, both the Other Backward Caste and Scheduled Caste students are of from similar Socio-cultural Environment and economic status. Their living conditions, facilities at home are almost same. As a result of that there is no significant difference, between Scheduled Caste students and Other Backward Caste students, in the Overall Academic Achievement and External marks at secondary level. At the same time, Other Backward Caste students score better than Scheduled Caste students in their internal marks and it is significant at 0.05 level.

The other variables, Medium of Instruction, Locality of Residence and Religion have no effect on Academic Achievement of the government secondary school students of Puducherry.

The Socio-cultural Environment of the secondary school student has a linear positive correlation with the Academic Achievement. This proves that the Socio-cultural Environment in which a student live determines the Academic Achievement. Hence it is important for the students to be provided with a conducive Socio-cultural Environment along with proper school practices.

CONCLUSION

This study attempts to produce new knowledge about the Socio-cultural Environment and the Academic Achievement of secondary school students of Puducherry. It also examines the difference in both Socio-cultural Environment and Academic Achievement with respect to the gender, community, religion, locality of residence and medium of instruction of the students. This study also made an attempt to study whether there is any relationship between Socio-cultural Environment and Academic Achievement of the secondary school students. The findings of the study shows that the gender of the students influence the Academic Achievement and the female students are outperforming their male counterparts in both internal and external achievement. The study also finds out a linear positive relationship between Socio-cultural Environment and Academic Achievement. Hence, to improve the Academic Achievement of the secondary school students of Puducherry, due importance has to be given in providing

better Socio-cultural Environment. The Academic Achievement of boys is low compared to their female counterparts. The difference is significant in both Internal and External examination performances. The school have to pay more attention to this issue and steps may be taken to improve the Academic Achievement of boys.

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